THE CHAPLAIN AND THE WAR

By J. Esslemont Adams, B.D.
Chaplain to the Forces

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J. ESSLEMONT ADAMS, B.D.

CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES

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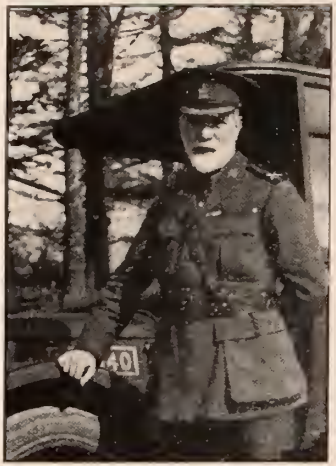

REV. J. M. SIMMS, C.M.G., K.H.C., D.D.,
Major-General,
Principal Chaplain to the Expeditionary Force.

THE CHAPLAIN AND THE WAR

I

THE CHAPLAIN AND THE WAR

"WE are fighting for high ideals." So Lord Roberts wrote in his farewell message to the Empire, and the spirit of the great Commander-in-Chief is the spirit animating the nation to-day. "After what you have come through, you won't want to go back," said a lady to a Highland Light Infantry man wounded at Mons. "Madam," he replied, "if you had been where I have been, and seen what I have seen, you would want to go back and do your duty." In a letter to his home people, describing the scenes of desolation through which his battalion had marched in Northern

France, a private in the Scottish Rifles adds the comment: "If spared, I would rather fight on for twenty years than ever see our homes and towns laid waste like this." To-day we are under arms to take our part in upholding the public law of Europe. We are out for a principle, for the old principle that has always fired the blood of Britons —to defend the right and to deliver the oppressed.

A wonderful and horrible thing—Militarism—has to be exterminated. Germany, mocking treaties and defying not only the laws of civilisation but that higher law, that divine instinct which we call Humanity, has drenched Europe in blood and tears. Her pretensions to be the self-appointed arbiter of the world have stirred the soul of our Empire till in the farthest outposts its sons have felt the beat of the national idea and rallied for the defence of the old ideals. When the Indian troops were on their way to France, Lord Curzon asked the question, "Why are they coming?" His answer was, "They are coming because the Empire means something to them. Their spontaneous act of homage testifies to the brotherhood which is the real cement of the Empire." India,

Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the West Indies have given of their best. Nor is it only on the battlefields of France and Flanders and the barren slopes of Gallipoli—and now in Serbia too—that our sons are called to fight. We must not forget that away amid the sands and swamps of Mesopotamia, in remote and inaccessible parts of Africa, far from the help and sympathy of the homeland, they are countering the powerful machinations of a pompous, ambitious, and unscrupulous foe. They are standing on guard from the Soudan to the Mediterranean, from Samoa to Singapore, from Hong-Kong to Ceylon, and up to the frontiers of Afghanistan. And round all sweeps the strong arm of our Navy, linking up our scattered possessions, defending and protecting them with unsleeping vigilance.

As in the old days in Scotland the clear note of Christian faith sounded through the eras of civil and religious warfare, so to-day the note of Christian faith has sounded again. But it has taken a new and a deeper tone. Our fighting men, believing that vengeance is the attribute of the Lord, believe that *they are His instruments*. For this grim crusade is a Holy Crusade. Many a man who has gone

to "do his bit," rejoicing in his own strength and glad to give himself for the old country, under the daily pressure of the stark presence of death has been touched to finer issues. He has felt the need of a strength beyond his own, and found the priceless Friend who is "as a covert from the tempest"; "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." To him has been revealed that mystic intimacy which keeps the soul serene although the body be racked with pain.

So, man's extremity is God's opportunity. The hunger and thirst for the living God is an impressive and triumphant fact. When France entered on the war she had no chaplains attached either to Navy or Army. The Administration made no provision for the religious aspirations of her fighting men. But the significant fact is that before the campaign was four months old, the appeal for Padres was so strong that it had to be met. The Comtesse de Courson is authority for the statement that to-day France has over twenty thousand priests serving in various capacities, and that all her battleships and armies have their chaplains. In a struggle like the present there is need for the man who is the outward symbol of the spirit-

ual forces so vitally involved. The British authorities realised this. When Britain mobilised her forces, she mobilised her chaplains. But the normal establishment of chaplains was inadequate to meet the growing demands of the Army in the Field. Such being the case, an appeal was speedily made to the Churches to send out temporary acting chaplains. As Principal Chaplain in the Western area, the War Office appointed Brigadier-General (now Major-General) the Reverend J. M. Simms, D.D., a man of rare sagacity and wide experience, who for over thirty years has shared the fortunes of our Army in many a campaign—in Egypt, in the Soudan, in South Africa, and elsewhere. Under Dr. Simms' administration this department has grown from a strength of fifty-four to over six hundred chaplains, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jew. Of this total, ninety are Presbyterian, and of these many are ministers of our own Church released from their charges for a period to serve with battalions of Regulars, or Territorials, or Kitchener's Army. The privilege of engaging in this spiritual service overseas is the opportunity not merely of a lifetime but of a century. Those who have been permitted

to visit the Army in the Field have recognised this, and testified to the greatness of the chaplain's work.

The Very Rev. A. Wallace Williamson, D.D., St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, as

THE VERY REV. A. WALLACE WILLIAMSON, D.D.

representing Scottish Presbyterianism, visited in May last the Expeditionary Force in France. His presence for a time with the fighting men at the front, with units on the lines of communication, and with troops at the various base dépôts, his addresses to eager

congregations of soldiers, and his kind words of comfort to the wounded in hospitals, were of the greatest value and appreciated as a stimulus. The Church did well to send the right man, and owes the Principal Chaplain, Dr. Simms, much for his personal interest in arranging that Dr. Williamson should see and speak to so many men in the brief period at his disposal. To none was his visit more inspiring than to chaplains from our own Church to whom he brought his benediction.

II

WORK IN HOSPITAL

THE chaplain on arriving Overseas is promptly posted to duty either among the workers or the wounded. In the Western area—the original and probably ultimate theatre of this war—the chaplain may be set to duty near the coast in one of those palatial casinos, hotels, or club-houses which have been temporarily transformed into hospitals for our wounded, or sent up to a clearing-station near the firing line.

When a great engagement is in progress, such as Ypres, October 1914, Neuve Chapelle, March 1915, or Loos, September 1915, a constant procession of maimed men and of horse-hauled waggons carrying the worst cases, streams from the trenches along the French highways to the nearest field ambulance or advanced dressing-station. Many of the men have received on the field, or in some battered cottage near it, temporary aid

from the medical officers and staff of the R.A.M.C. The field ambulance rapidly fills, and the chaplain there is kept busy passing from room to room encouraging and comforting sufferers, or in some serviceable way assisting the doctors and orderlies in their work. As soon as a dressing has been renewed, or a soothing drug administered, or

IN A FIRING TRENCH.

a swift operation performed which may save a life, the wounded are distributed among the motor ambulances waiting at the hospital door, and taken to a casualty clearing-station farther from the danger zone, probably in a town 10 or 15 miles from the place where the battle is raging. There the wounded are in safety and in the atmosphere

of peace. The casualty clearing-station is furnished with the appliances and conveniences of the modern hospital. Great operations are performed night and day, gentle and skilful nursing sisters are unwearying in their administrations, and as a rule patients remain till they are sufficiently strong to be sent down to a great base hospital, or even across to England. Railways and canals pass through most of the French towns selected for casualty clearing-stations, and the wounded are conveyed to the seaboard either

CANAL, WITH BARGE.

on big canal barges equipped as floating hospitals, or on what the soldier calls the "Red Cross Special Night Express." Base hos-

pitals, which are remote from the danger zone, are the final anchorage of the wounded overseas. Here they are detained until they are classified either to be sent home because they will never again be fit for active service ; or marked "P.B." (permanent base), which means only able in future to do restricted work ; or listed as fit to go back after a time to fight.

It does not fall within the province of the writer to speak here of the devotion of members of the R.A.M.C., from undecorated stretcher-bearers to illustrious surgeons. But the heroism of medical officers and stretcher-bearers under fire, and the self-sacrificing labours of doctors, nurses, and orderlies in hospital, are beyond all praise. Some hospitals are near the danger zone and others near the sea ; some are compact and small, others are considerable camps, with accommodation for many thousands of patients ; but whatever their description the chaplain has priceless opportunities. In the morning, when surgeons and doctors may not be disturbed in ward work, he is busy censoring letters, but for the rest of the day he is in and out among the patients all the time. Those whose

wounds are slight or who are already convalescent are writing letters or reading, listening to the gramophone or piecing a picture-puzzle ; but whatever the occupation, they are prompt to put it aside when the Padre comes along, and eager for a crack about home and dear ones, or the war and the occasion where the casualties took place. What confidences and confessions then ! What memorable readings of the Good Book and prayers to the Good God ! And what a privilege to sit with such men and to testify to their pluck and contentment ! In one bed is an emaciated Irish Fusilier who had been for a whole week in an abandoned trench before he could be rescued. His pals

"ASLEEP IN AN ABANDONED TRENCH."

knew where he was, but it was death to

venture near him. During those long weary days his whole sustenance was the remnant of a ration and the contents of a waterbottle, and some rain-water collected in his waterproof sheet. In a bed near by is an Englishman of the same heroic type. His heavy bandages testify to his wounds. A ridge had been ripped through his hair and the lobe of his right ear cut off by a bullet. His right eye was one great claret-coloured bruise ; his right foot had been amputated, and also two fingers of his right hand. As he was telling the chaplain how it all happened, the ward Sister came up and said, "Isn't he a wonder?" With a wan smile the lad replied, "Yes, yes, sir, I'm a wonder right enough! But I've a grudge against Sister all the same. She brought the Surgeon along early this morning and they wheeled me away somewhere and then cut off my foot and my fingers. That was all right, sir, and I'm very grateful. But just look at that hand, sir," stretching out his left hand. "Look at it, sir ; why, only an hour ago Sister there came along with a pair of scissors and cut all my finger-nails. I suppose she thought I might scratch her! I'll watch her, sir, or if I don't, before I

know it she'll be having my teeth pulled, in case I want to eat too much! Never mind, sir, she's a bit of all right." And so, in spite of wounds and mutilations, he had the pluck to keep smiling and get his change out of one for whose devoted ministrations he was profoundly grateful.

This gratitude marks all ranks. More than one officer restored to strength in a well-known officers' hospital in Northern France has told of a certain night Sister whose duty it is to end her twelve hours' watch by waking the patients in time for their early meal or medicine. God has gifted her with a glorious voice, and at 7.30 every morning she takes her stand in the great vestibule and sings "Annie Laurie" or "Oor Ain Folk," and as she sings the sleepers stir and then wake, not to the pain of their wounds, but to the wonder of the sweet familiar songs.

Many patients are able to attend evening prayers in the wards, or to gather for frequent divine service, but there are always some too spent to say much or to appreciate anything except a verse or two of Scripture, a little talk about God and His love to us in Jesus Christ, or a simple prayer in which

they and their country and their comrades are remembered. In one bed lies a Guardsman with his entire lower jaw blown off; in another, what had once been a man but now is a sad wreck, scorched and scarred beyond recognition. Close by these two is a mere lad with both limbs gone and the lamp of life slowly burning out. Yet he is at peace and not afraid of the dark road he must go. There is light in the valley for him. He has given himself for King and country, and he knows he is safe in the care of God, who soon will lead him away from all his pain and weariness. Is it strange that the chaplain longs and hungers for the prayers of the people at home, that in the power of God he may soothe and strengthen these broken and dying men?

Hard by these hospitals is a sacred plot, set apart as a soldiers' cemetery, and at a busy base almost every day the chaplain is summoned to lay in mother earth all that is left of the shining boys who have captured eternity. All up and down the line are graves and little graveyards, but where the big hospitals are, many hundreds of our young soldiers sleep their long sleep side by side. The Graves Commission has laid

out these resting-places with reverent taste, marking each one with a cross bearing the

"MARKING EACH ONE WITH A CROSS."

man's name and regiment, and, as a register is kept with all particulars, it will comfort people in proud sorrow to believe that later on the places where their dear ones rest will be easily identified.

"Oh, if the sonless mothers weeping,
The widowed girls, could look inside
The country that hath them in keeping
Who went to the Great War and died,
They would rise and put their mourning off,
And say: 'Thank God, he has enough!'"
(KATHARINE TYNAN, "Flower of Youth.")

III

WORK ON THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION

ACTIVE Service among the strong is very different from Active Service among the sick. The strain of constant contact with suffering is absent, and the varied duties clothe the days with endless interest. On the lines of communication from the coast to the front are soldiers, soldiers everywhere. Their task is to equip the fighting divisions. From various seaport towns huge consignments of war material, food, and clothing require to be sent daily to several "railheads." These towns are hives of industry. In one of them is the biggest *hangar* or store in the world, over half a mile long, through which it is permitted to drive in a motor-car. In the same base is a bakery which produces day by day bread sufficient to feed a population equal to that of Edinburgh. Dock labourers in khaki are

busy unloading vessels or housing stores in sheds, or loading supply trains, or hauling munitions to the vans which carry shot and shell for the use of the Infantry and Artillery in the firing line. Squads of skilled mechanics are hard at work, some perhaps

BATHING IN CANAL NEAR REINFORCEMENT CAMP.

mending crippled aircraft, others repairing motors, others testing weapons of war. Not far away are vast camps—veterinary camps with a staff employed in healing sick horses, remount camps with hundreds of fresh horses waiting to be sent forward as required, convalescent camps full of soldiers discharged

from hospital and now resting and recuperating, reinforcement camps with thousands of new troops drilling and preparing either to join various regiments or to go up in battalions to the firing line. In every centre of industry the chaplain is busy securing spiritual comfort and comradeship and regular religious services for the men. He is ready at any time to do what he can for them, but his best chance is in the evenings when the work of the day is done. Of all places on the lines his most fruitful field is in the great reinforcement camps where drill and route marching are the order of each day. The men there know their goal. Any morning they may be entrained and sent to take their place among the battalions farther up, or selected to fill gaps made in some costly attack. Such men are stimulated by the message which tells them how to fight the good fight. They are grateful also to those who provide huts and tents in which they may listen comfortably to the Padre when he preaches, and often side by side with him enjoy a rare evening of cheery entertainment. Among those who have handsomely catered for the soldiers in this respect in seaport towns, at convalescent

camps, and in reinforcement camps, is the Y.M.C.A. The huts are of priceless use to chaplains as well as to soldiers. The Presbyterian chaplain very frequently has his parade service and evening meetings there. As the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, the Soldiers' Christian Association, the Salvation Army, and others have buildings of their own, their need of Y.M.C.A. hospitality is not so pronounced as is that of Protestants not belonging to the Church of England. These huts are not only the soldiers' church on Sunday, they are the soldiers' clubs where letters are written and games played, the soldiers' restaurants where anything may be purchased from shaving-soap to sweetmeats, the soldiers' concert halls where wonderful impromptu sing-songs are held and grand evening programmes sustained often by distinguished artists. Various concert parties have come overseas to sing to soldiers on the lines of communication, and many of our foremost artists have given unsparingly of their best, and surely never to more grateful and appreciative audiences. No man who heard "The Benediction" sung at the close of a certain memorable Sunday evening service

not so long ago will ever forget it. Little did the singer think as she faced these bronzed warriors that before the week closed many who listened to her would be killed in action. They went up the line next day with her gracious message, "God be very good to you, brave men," vibrating in their hearts and comforting them with the assurance that living or dying "God is Love," and that "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

IV

WORK AT THE FRONT

MOST chaplains hope sooner or later to be posted to duty at the front. There, in the rattle of rifle fire and the roar of artillery, they feel the thrill of battle and taste the stern reality of war. Every village and farm and wayside cottage is full of combatants, and houses partly wrecked by shell fire are not despised as billets. With a roof

"PARTLY WRECKED BY SHELL FIRE."

for cover and a floor for bed, the British soldier "keeps smiling" and is thankful for his daily mercies. The chaplain's life in such an area is crowded with interest. If he is attached to a battalion, he probably stays at headquarters with the Commanding Officer, the Adjutant, the Doctor, and one or two of the senior officers. If he is the right man the chances are that he is not only a minister of the gospel but major-domo as well! He is made mess president, buys the mess luxuries, arranges the menus, and sees that hot water is ready for those coming "home" from the trenches. If the prunes are badly stewed, or the lamps badly trimmed, or the precenting badly performed, or the sermon badly preached, he is promptly "told off." He is all things to all men, and has innumerable opportunities of friendship with all ranks as he goes from billet to billet, visiting the companies housed in each. He easily wins affection and confidences. He carries in his valise all sorts of wonderful things given him for safe-keeping, from the Colonel's Will to the youngest subaltern's love letters. He has one man's signet-ring, another's cap badge, a third's skean-dhu. When the battalion moves up to the trenches he may

go with it or he may not. In the summer-time, when the spell in the trenches may extend for weeks, he has a good excuse for making his home in a dug-out; but in the

"HIS HOME IN A DUG-OUT."

bitter winter months, when the men are in the trenches only for a few days at a time, his orders are to remain with those left in billets. The staff who look after these billets, the transport section, who go up every night with supplies of food and ammunition for the firing line and come back weary and very late, are then his parish proper. Frequently

a message comes from the front asking for the Padre, and straightway he calls for his horse and rides forward. A few hundred yards from the trenches he finds the Reserves

"SUPPLIES OF FOOD FOR THE FIRING LINE."

in some hardly recognisable ruin, once a farm, or an inn, or a church. Hiding his horse in the safest place in a region where no one and no thing is safe, he sits for a while with the men in their so-called shelters, playfully christened "Shell View," "Buckingham Palace," "Wait-and-See House," and gets all the news. Then, ascertaining for what he is needed, he goes on to his appointed task. Sometimes this takes him into the trenches. These are not easy to promenade in, the mud is deep and the space narrow, but with

pictures from magazines, photographs, verses of poetry, and texts of Scripture stuck upon the walls, these dreary drains where human beings keep vigil day and night are made as ornamental and cheerful as possible. A lad is sick ; or one is slain, and there is to be a

"SOME HARDLY RECOGNISABLE RUIN, ONCE . . . A CHURCH."

trench burial. But the chaplain may not have to go into the trenches. When possible, the body is brought out under cover of darkness and placed in the Aid Post three or four hundred yards behind the trenches. Close by, the corner of a field or of an orchard has been reserved as a little cemetery. Wrapped

in a blanket, the soldier's body is borne forth by a party of his comrades. A simple service is read, the 23rd Psalm and one or two verses of New Testament Scripture; and a short prayer is offered. Then the wail of the pipes playing "The Flowers of the Forest," or the clear note of the bugle sounding the "Last Post," carries the tidings to all that a gallant comrade has been laid to his rest.

Not only after a battle where the death roll is heart-breaking, but in the grim endurance of trench warfare, the losses by death are very serious. Men of the right stuff, strong sons of toil who laid down their tools and left their trade to do their bit, and youths also of the finest intellectual quality, with the prizes of life waiting for them, have sprung to arms only to fall in heroic self-sacrifice. They had to.

> "When duty whispers low: 'Thou must';
> The youth replies: 'I can.'"

How often, when a career of exceptional promise is cut off at its dawn, do the words rise unbidden:

> "Lycidas is dead, dead in his prime,
> Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer!"

Nowhere has the sacrifice on the altar of war been heavier or more impressive than among the generation of the future scholars and scientists of our race, who at the first threatening of danger rallied in their thousands from Universities and seats of learning in our own land and also in the Dominions beyond the Seas. Among the slain are those who cannot be replaced, youths who in the springtide of life elected to "scorn delights and live laborious days," some of them with their foot firm on the first rung of the ladder of fame.

When the battalion comes back to billets,

A BILLET.

two or three miles from the trenches, the chaplain has almost more than one man's work. The contents of his store—candles, writing-paper, games, books, cigarettes, and such like—are eagerly clamoured for. Barns in the district serve as club-houses for the companies and make splendid centres for evening entertainments. The versatility and talent of the soldiers are extraordinary. One week they are fighting for dear life ; the next, they are giving first-class concerts. Were there ever such concerts! With a little manipulation a bicycle pump is transformed into a trombone ; a cigar box, a length of hardwood, and a yard of thin wire make a one-stringed violin ; one man is a juggler, another a ventriloquist, while singers and reciters are plentiful as Flanders mud. The writer has before him the programme of an informal concert to be given by a Highland Division to an audience of Canadians. A lad from Shotts with a priceless voice is to sing "Mary of Argyll," an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander will play classical music on a piano of sorts, a sergeant in the Black Watch will dance the sword dance to the skirl of the pipes, a Seaforth Highlander will sing Scotch songs, and every one

knows he will bring down the house. The Padre also has his bit to do. Shoulder to shoulder with the men in their everyday life, securing their confidence, taking charge of their treasures, arranging their games and concerts with or for them, he paves the way for getting at their hearts and speaking with effect about the things of God. Every sing-song by a little manœuvring may be made to end with worship. The men are glad that it should be so. A few verses are read, then comes a prayer, then in silence each man says his own prayers, and then the benediction is pronounced. Last of all comes "God save the King." The sing-song is over and the audience quickly scatters to the company billets.

This willingness to end a festive evening thus hints at a wonderful thing. A Major who has been in the firing line for eight months writes: "I think I can safely say that there is not a man there who does not in time develop a sense of religion, even if he never had one before." Let this statement be qualified severely, let it be granted that there are many to whom it does not apply, it still remains strictly true that multitudes have had their faith deepened and

multitudes have learned as never before the need and the value of faith in God. The book read most of all is the New Testament. A quartermaster tells how he found grooms reading it together in the battalion stable; a machine-gun officer writes to say that he never read much of it at home, but that it is the only book he can settle to read as he sits through the long nights in the trenches beside his gun; a platoon of Guards in the Ypres section in the early days of the war was grateful that although there was not a Testament among them, one man who was a Roman Catholic possessed a Douai Bible. Bibles are valued, and the National Bible Society of Scotland, with splendid appreciation of the situation, has promptly sent gifts of Scriptures to chaplains asking supplies for soldiers overseas.

The Bible opens the way to prayer, and prayer is everywhere at the front. "When you got into the trenches what did you do?" "We jolly-well said our prayers." Old things are passing away, and all things are becoming new. When the Lord's Prayer is said overseas, the congregation does not listen; at once every man joins in saying it. When Communion is to be celebrated all

who are members are present if they can, and on a Sacrament Sunday recently in one

CAMP SERVICE.

battalion over 160 names were added to the roll of the Presbyterian churches in Scotland.

"HE CALLS FOR HIS HORSE AND RIDES FORWARD."

V

THE FAITH OF THE SOLDIER

RELIGION has set its seal on the soul of a great section of the Army in the Field. It is a moving sight to face a battalion paraded in a field or in an old French orchard or in the courtyard of a quaint farm, a congregation of brawny, rollicking, eager men—some born fighters itching to destroy the enemy who has made havoc of peace on earth, others hating the whole brutal business of war yet doing their bit gamely—all of them jeopardising their lives when life is sweet and flushed with hope, courting danger rather than taking cover, and all of them eagerly listening to a short straight address on a great gospel truth, and then giving themselves as the Covenanters did long ago to prayer and to God. The surface shyness about religion has melted, and everywhere are men not ashamed to own that faith is the bread of their souls. They talk about

the great things, though they have neither

"THEY TALK ABOUT GREAT THINGS."

time for tip-toeing on the niceties of creeds nor enthusiasm about the shibboleths of sects. Many there have to face death daily. Many die daily. Up against the elemental facts men appreciate the value of the elemental verities. They have much of the spirit of the men of the Moss Hags. They stand on the edge of the battlefield with bowed uncovered head whilst the chaplain prays, and go into battle with Psalms like the 23rd, 93rd, 103rd, and 121st thrilling them. Their fortitude is fed on the faith they have in God the Father, Jesus Christ the Saviour, the Spirit of Christ in

self-sacrifice, and the assurance of the life everlasting. What more need be said? The kit of the soul thus furnished contains the weapons to win victory over danger and death.

To such men the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. They believe that God cares for them. "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." A private in the Gordons writing to his minister frankly announces: "We have been through the terrible experience of a great attack and have had trying times. The platoon of thirty rifles which set out with me now numbers only twelve. I put my full trust in God, and He has kept me. I am thankful that He made me brave—and He has brought me out unharmed." A Major of Infantry in a famous fighting battalion states in a letter: "It is a great responsibility which I feel keenly, and I think the higher up one goes the more one feels the impotence of man and the need for guidance and for One to lean on." A widow in the North country, who with heroic industry has brought up her three children, sent forth in August last her only boy, aged 19, because his King and his country needed him. When

he went away she took down the Family Bible, cut out the 23rd Psalm, and gave the page as a parting gift to her son. He put it in his pay-book, and many a time has told his mother in his letters that he was prouder of that gift than if he had received a Bank of England note, and that he "always takes out the torn page and reads the Psalm before he goes to the trenches." When his effects come home the thing his mother says she will look for first and keep always as her comfort is the torn page she gave her darling who now sleeps his crimson sleep on the green fields of Flanders. Officers and privates, humble and high-born, bear the same testimony. One of our aristocracy, just before going with his company to hold a poisonous bit of the line, turned to the chaplain and said, "Padre, just let's have a little prayer here and now. Ask God to take care of my men and me, and help us to hold this rotten bit of the front decently." These casual illustrations gleaned from the field of war sound like a challenge, and are a challenge to our young people at home. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war

should rise against me, in this will I be confident."

But there is more to be said. The faith of soldiers in Jesus Christ and His redemptive personality is another of the great spiritual revelations of the war. To many Jesus is real as never before in all His radiant glory, as Sacrifice, Substitute, Saviour. Men who had heard of Him with indifference and suspicion say that now their eyes see the King in His glory. They understand Jesus because they are out on service for others, and substitution, redemption, sacrifice are in their lot. They catch the emphasis on "a ransom for many." They are suffering and dying for others. Wife and children, parent and comrade, King and country are to be delivered by the shedding of human blood. And not only those who are dear, but all the people of the realm are to partake in the triumph. This great human atonement is also to deliver those not worthy of great love—the coward, the idler, the scoffer, the sophist, and the striker, the man who thinks it nobler to be a coward than a corpse, who has no patriotic spirit and does not see the urgency of crushing an enemy gloating in infamy. Thinking on these things men

mount to the understanding of God in Christ. "I tell you what it is, sir; if Jesus Christ is anything less than Redeemer for us all, good and bad, the Saviour who died the just for the unjust and has done all we need, we fellows have got no use for Him." Their assurance is that He has done all, and they venture on Him and venture bravely. When asked at a camp service to choose the praise, the men show their faith by the choice of hymns such as "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," or "Jesus, Lover of my soul," or "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." Such is the faith of officers and men. On the 30th of March the officers of the 7th Division who had survived the ordeal of Neuve Chapelle gathered in a little cinema palace not far from that historic village. What a weird gathering! "All that was left of them." When they rose to sing, that little company of officers sang as confession of their faith,

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God."

As the Christ sacrifice is their boast, the Christ spirit is their standard. On the one side is the care of officers of the right sort for their battalions and companies and platoons, saving them from danger where skill can do it, thinking of their comfort and happiness always ; and on the other side, the

ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF ONE BATTALION.

splendid devotion and implicit obedience of men to their officers. The true standard is there—"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." That chivalrous note gives point and happiness to the daily round. Men are keen, in spite of hardships and perils, because they are enduring for others that in the end

of the day there may be a new peace and wealth in life.

All this is true about great numbers in the thick of the fight to-day, and to all this only one thing need be added. The crown of their faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is the "sure and certain hope that as they have borne the image of the earthy, they shall also bear the image of the heavenly." They are saved by hope. The future is not a great speculation, but a glorious assurance. They shall not drift beyond God's love and care. They know not what they shall be, but they know that all is well. The sceptic, the frivolous, the faint hearted would learn a lesson of priceless satisfaction by going on active service for a season. There they too might discover that, as in the past, there is still a great answer to the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of God?"

A young officer—a Victoria Cross hero—as he lay dying in the month of May of this year, in trenches which had been shelled and gassed, said, "Tell them I die happy." On a bright morning in the same summer season, a lad who also had done great things and whose "number was up," as he used to say, lay in a hospital looking over the sunlit sea,

on the far side of which was "Blighty, dear old Blighty" (the soldier's synonym for Home), and was heard softly singing, "Safe in the arms of Jesus." In one of the great reinforcement camps it was the writer's custom to go to and fro amongst the tents after dark, and here and there have prayers with the men. One tent he struck, tenanted by Sherwood Foresters, proves that the strong value this hope as do the sick. After prayers one evening, one of the boys said, "I say, let's sing our hymn to the Padre." It was their habit to sing this hymn last thing after "lights out" and just before they turned over to sleep. "Shut up, Charlie," was the answer, "the chaplain don't want to hear it." But on the chaplain's saying he certainly did, the boys sang it, and before they went forward to the firing line they sent him as a souvenir a paper with their names subscribed, and below their names the words of their own hymn :

"At the end of the journey we shall wear a crown
In the New Jerusalem.
Then away over Jordan to my blessed Jesus,
Then away over Jordan to wear a starry crown,
For you and me, there's a crown of victory"

The Faith of the Soldier

Emotional and crude, some may call this, but it is the testimony of brave and thoughtful men, to whom amongst others are committed the destinies of the Empire to-day.

VI

THE FUTURE OF THE SOLDIER

WE believe that we shall win the war. But the end of Prussian Militarism will only be the end of the first chapter in the story of a gigantic redemptive programme. The devotion of those we so properly admire for their valour means that we should not ignore their purpose, but complete it. Henceforth, no powerful and pretentious nation will dare to crush the liberties of any little and free country. But we shall be dishonoured unless as a people we are ready to add a second chapter in the story of human redemption. And in this work none of us may be onlookers, or borderers, or patrons. We must with a great national purpose turn our redemption from Militarism won by the fallen and the wounded to larger issues, binding on the whole armour of God, and going forward together, "from victory to victory . . . till every foe is vanquished,

and Christ is Lord indeed." Otherwise the agony of the past months will be in vain. With these things in our heart we may take a lesson from our bitter enemy. The German motto has been "Thoroughness." The Allies know that. The German principle is not only a great principle; it is a Christian principle—misdirected. It is for us to take the principle and the proper direction, and walk in the light as children of light. So we shall keep our place in the sun. We have the powers of evil to fight within us and all about us. In normal times thousands of people in England are on the edge of starvation. This is only one of the sores weakening the richest country in the world. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" must be no longer a mere lip intercession. To a chastened and cleansed generation it will prove the simple petition of men and women who are convinced that it is theirs to "do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God."

The splendour of youthful courage and family sacrifice has a meaning for the Christian Church. The Church is summoned to garner the fruits of a great emotion and to see that this emotion is trans-

lated into life. The Church has not shaken itself, and it is high time to awake out of sleep. The day is at hand of new opportunity to reveal as never in our time the glory of the impregnable truths which are the immortal heritage of our race, truths which are making manifest to our fighting men the wonder of the presence of God, and the glory of self-sacrifice, and the reality of life everlasting. The Church has been troubled about many things — to-day one thing is needful. Dr. Andrew Bonar used to say that the greatest need of ministers was "Courage." Surely not of ministers alone! The July issue of *The Record* was greedily read by many belonging to our Church in their soldiers' billets abroad, and that because of two articles in particular—one dealing with Professor Oman's book, *The War and its Issues*, the other reproducing an address by Principal Denney on *The War and the Voice of God to the Church.* In one mess tent a copy lay about with three passages underlined by some grateful reader. "If the war resulted in a transformation of the churches it would be the best security for all other victories." "We have gone our way to what *we* see—a timorous, ineffective

Christianity of negations and routine without dust and heat, without appeal to conflict and sacrifice." "We should search our hearts and see whether we have faced our responsibilities as we should." These words have found echo in the hearts of many men, and the chaplain is tempted to ask—does the Church accept these sentences: and, if not, what will be her outlook when the sons return who will be spared to come back? A Major in a Canadian battalion, a man of conspicuous daring and judgment, in his eagerness about the future wrote these words recently: "What a man does feel, however inarticulately, is that there is a Power overruling the universe, and shaping even the horrors of this present war for good. The only preaching that makes any appeal to him is that of our Lord Jesus Christ, His sacrifice for mankind, and the hope which He has given us for the hereafter. When one has seen men sacrificing their lives willingly, even eagerly, for others and for an ideal which they only dimly realise, it is a little difficult to conceive that the life of any such man perishes with the limp body. Men at the front are in a frame of mind to accept the great truths of Christianity about life and death. The Church

must prepare itself to receive these men and have a message for them when they return, otherwise they will drift away from it once and for all."

"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" A great door of service is opening—service for the soldiers and sailors when they finish their red work, service for the youth of Scotland, service for Humanity. The words penned by Lord Roberts for the Army in the Field five days before he died—"We are fighting for high ideals"—are words for the Church of the living Christ. The Church will prosper as the glad and unmatched exponent of the things men to-day know to be the things needful. She will be the nurse of great convictions, one Church in spite of all that seems to deny the appearance of this, with one faith, one message, and one goal. Overseas there is neither Established Church, United Free Church, Free Church, nor Free Presbyterian Church, but a great Union embracing in a solid spiritual friendship all who worship Jesus Christ and Him only. Chaplains exalt the things which unite. They share services, take services in turn, do services for one another, as if sect were forgotten, and their hearers are as re-

presentative and content with the situation as the speakers. God has come near and blessed those gathered in this spirit. When the men come home, sorrow will fill their hearts if we are satisfied with anything less than "the good of the people of Scotland." The time is ripe for hand to grasp hand in a great and holy Union, not because ecclesiastical difficulties are solved or certain interests are conserved, but because "the King's business demands haste," and the great business of the King's Church is to secure a happier life for men and women.

CHURCH BELL.

REV. PATRICK R. MACKAY, D.D.

VII

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Connor, J. M.	(Reg. Chaplain).
Coutts, A.	Edinburgh.

COUTTS, J. W.	Glasgow.
COWAN, W.	Banchory.
COWPER, J. M.	(Reg. Chaplain).
DOUGLAS, J.	Mains, Dundee.
EWING, W.	Edinburgh.
FORGAN, J. R.	Uddingston.
GAULD, W. W.	Callander.
GRAY, A. H.	Glasgow.
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IRELAND, J. T. C.	Stow.
JOHNSTONE, J.	Paisley.
LAMONT, C	Saltcoats.
LOGAN, INNES	Braemar.
MACAULAY, T. C.	Larbert.
MACDONALD, R.	Dingwall.
MACKINNON, A. G.	Greenock.
MACLAUCHLAN, F J.	Glasgow.
MACLEAN, E.	Avoch.
MACNAUGHTON, J. M	Campbeltown.
MATHIESON, W. S.	Galashiels.
MENZIES, R.	Glasgow.
MILLER, J. H	Edinburgh.
MUIL, W. S.	Auchterarder.
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PATERSON, W. R.	(Reg. Chaplain).
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